



Rep. Richard DeBolt addresses his colleagues in the House speaking in favor a bill authorizing independent performance audits of state agencies.

Creating jobs for our communities

Washington experienced its strongest job growth in six years with a net gain of 60,000 jobs in 2004. The vast majority of this growth was in the public sector. We are in a modest recovery, with policies aimed at creating jobs and improving our economy beginning to pay dividends.

We cannot afford to become complacent, however. This recovery is expected to be slow and competition for business expansion remains fierce among neighboring states and other markets in the Pacific Rim. Job creation remains a priority for House Republicans this year, with a continued emphasis on bringing employment opportunities to rural areas that have not always reaped the benefits of our state’s economic expansion.

Our job creation package for 2005 includes the following proposals:

- Rein in regulatory taxes in workers’ compensation and other programs that make Washington an expensive place to do business.
- Reform the state’s rulemaking process to ensure accountability within government agencies when rules are imposed that have the force of law.
- Extend tax incentives for start-ups and small business to help stimulate new high-growth industries.

Rep. DeBolt has introduced legislation to help create jobs in rural communities by providing tax incentives for businesses that harvest, transport and process timber all within Washington using local workers.

Rep. Gary Alexander
Rep. Richard DeBolt

P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

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2005 Session Report ● 20th Legislative District



Rep. Richard DeBolt

Committees:
Capital Budget

Natural Resources,
Ecology & Parks



Rep. Gary Alexander

Committees:
Appropriations,
Ranking Republican
Health Care

2005 Session Report • 20th Legislative District

Spring 2005

Dear friends,

The 2005 legislative session is underway and it is an honor to have another opportunity to represent our 20th District communities in the Legislature. We are wasting little time tackling the real work of the Legislature, with a two-year operating budget, health care improvements, job creation and election reform topping our agenda.

We have also had a spirited debate on the certification of the historically close governor’s race. And while we stood up on behalf of citizens who have concerns about accuracy and fairness of this election, the results were certified. The questions surrounding this election are now in the hands of the courts.

We want to invite you to contact our legislative offices any time with your ideas, questions or concerns. Your input helps us do a better job of representing our communities.

Thank you for the honor of serving as your representatives. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,


Gary Alexander
State Representative


Richard DeBolt
State Representative

Ensuring free and fair elections

The long contentious gubernatorial election has caused many citizens to lose confidence in our election process. There have been a number of discrepancies in the way ballots were cast and counted in this historically close race. Ballots were lost, ballots were found, and thousands of those cast still can't be matched to individual voters. House Republicans have proposed a package of election reforms that take direct aim at the errors in this recent election. Our goal is to maintain integrity in the election process, restore public confidence in the results, and ensure every legal vote is given equal weight, whether you live in Lewis County or King County.



House Republican Election Reform Highlights

Restore Integrity to the Elections Process

- ❖ Reconstruct voter registration rolls by 2007 and conduct monthly checks for felons, deceased voters and duplicate registrations
- ❖ Verify voter ID at polls
- ❖ Increased penalties for illegal voters

Promote Public Confidence in Election Results

- ❖ Prevent improper mixing of ballot types so provisional ballots can't be counted and lost in the mix before being validated
- ❖ Ensure every vote has a voter by reconciling the number of ballots with the number voters credited with voting
- ❖ Establish a trigger for automatic revote if discrepancies between ballots and voters exceed the winning margin

Ensure Every Vote is Treated Fairly and Equally

- ❖ Move the primary to the third Tuesday in August to give counties more time to prepare and mail ballots, ensuring military ballots arrive sooner
- ❖ Require all ballots to be received by 8 p.m. on Election Day, except military ballots which may be accepted up until final certification.

Balancing the budget without raising taxes



You're going to hear a lot this session about an enormous state budget shortfall. By some estimates, the state is facing a budget gap of \$2.2 billion. That's a big number, but it's important that we put that in context.

Here are some facts:

- The state will have more money to spend in the next budget; not less.
- There will be enough tax revenue collected in the next biennium to increase state general fund spending by \$1.5 billion.
- That means the state can increase spending by 7 percent over the next two years without raising a single nickel in new taxes.

This state budget will have its challenges. But the problems are not just in the numbers. They are in the policies that dictate how the taxpayers' money is spent. The "shortfall" is created, in part, by the assumption that we must continue to do things the way we always have.

House Republicans support the following budget reforms:

- Restore the state spending limit law which has been weakened by lawmakers who sought to get around strict limits.
- Create a constitutional "rainy day" fund to prevent needless tax increases or draconian cuts to core services during economic downturns.
- Require a 60 percent majority vote to raise taxes.

Protecting taxpayers



Without fundamental changes in the way government spends your money, there will be a crisis every year and every year some will be calling for higher taxes.

Three bills were introduced the first week of session to raise taxes by nearly \$600 million. As we attempt to sustain economic growth here in Washington, this would be the worst time to burden families and employers with higher taxes.

Rep. Alexander has been appointed as Ranking Republican on the House Appropriations Committee. He will negotiate budget issues and will fight for a sustainable budget that forces government to live within its means.



Rep. Gary Alexander has been named Ranking Republican on the House Appropriations Committee and will serve as lead budget negotiator for House Republicans.

Getting answers to your election questions

The irregularities of the governor's election have cast a cloud over the outcome and raised questions as to whether every vote was given equal weight. We share the frustration of the citizens we represent who want to be reassured that this election was as fair and accurate as it could possibly be. We want you to have every confidence in the process and in the people who are elected to represent you.

That's why, after careful consideration, Republicans in the House of Representatives asked lawmakers to defer ratification of the gubernatorial election results. This would have allowed more time to answer questions about acknowledged mistakes made in King County that may have affected the outcome.

With Democrat majorities in both the House and Senate, the motion to delay certification failed. Christine Gregoire was sworn in as governor on Jan. 12. As legislators sworn to uphold the law and constitution, we will work with whomever is in the governor's office. But we also support the rights of citizens who filed a legal contest to this election. It is important that they receive a fair hearing to address their concerns.

This is not about who won or lost. It's about ensuring a reliable process – one that will produce a credible outcome and restore public trust in our elections.

Giving families more affordable health insurance

Our efforts to bring prosperity and opportunity to Washington would not be complete without addressing the need to make more affordable health insurance options available to families. We remain concerned about limited choices and rising costs in health care.

House Republicans are supporting reforms to create a more viable consumer-driven health care system. We want to address the obstacles that limit the choices you have in insurance coverage and address the problems that make health insurance increasingly expensive for you, your employer, and your doctor.

Our plan includes the following objectives:

- Ease mandates in insurance plans so that employers have more affordable options for providing basic coverage to their employees.
- Address skyrocketing medical malpractice premiums that are forcing many doctors and other health care providers to close their doors or limit services.
- Allow health savings accounts to help government, businesses and families stretch their health care dollars.

We'd like to hear from you!

If you have ideas, concerns or questions, please feel free to contact us here in Olympia. We can also help you in your dealings with state government.

Rep. Gary Alexander
John L. O'Brien Building 407
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
(360) 786-7990
alexander.gary@leg.wa.gov

Rep. Richard DeBolt
Legislative Building 427B
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
(360) 786-7896
debolt.richard@leg.wa.gov

Toll-Free Legislative Hotline: 1-800-562-6000